

**Board of Trustees**  
**Suffolk County Department of Parks**  
**Recreation and Conservation**

**Minutes of February 15, 2007 at Meadow Edge, West Sayville**

**BOARD MEMBERS**

Ray Corwin                      Chairman, Member at Large

**PRESENT:**

Miles Borden                  Trustee, Town of Smithtown

Gil Cardillo                   Trustee, Town of Riverhead

Gregory Dawson             Trustee, Town of Islip

Scott Hilary                   Trustee, Town of Southold

Alexander McKay            Trustee, Town of Huntington

Gary Olsen                    Trustee, Town of Brookhaven

Richard F. White, Jr.        Trustee, Town of East Hampton

**ABSENT:**

Aurelio Colina                Vice Chairman, Town of Southampton

John Fritz                     Trustee, town of Babylon

Terrence Pearsall            Member of the Board

Todd Stebbins                Member of the Board

Vacant                         Member of the Board

Vacant                         Trustee, Town of Shelter Island

**PARKS DEPARTMENT:**

Ronald F. Foley               Commissioner

Tracey Bellone                Deputy Commissioner

William Sickles               Senior Parks Superintendent

Colleen Hofmeister           Contracts Manager

Nick Gibbons                 Senior Environmental Analyst

Tom Hroncich                 Marketing Specialist

Ann Rothenberg              Assistant to the Commissioner

**GUESTS:**

Lauretta Fischer              Principal Environmental Analyst, Planning  
Department

Pat Zielenski                  Director, Real Property Acquisition &  
Mgmt.

Janet Longo                    Asst. to Commissioner, Dept. of Env. &  
Energy

Jennifer Kohn                  Assistant County Attorney

Chairman Corwin opened the meeting.

### **PUBLIC PORTION**

Mr. Richard Robbins: I would like to add my voice to the thousands of other Long Islanders requesting the legalization of allowing dogs to be off leash at Coindre Hall in Huntington and at suitable areas throughout Suffolk County parklands. I am an operant conditioning trainer and my dogs are certified assistive pet therapy dogs. My dogs must be properly exercised so they can be at their best. This can only be achieved by participating in an off leash area. I have intensely studied and researched canine behavior and dog attacks. The conclusion of years of study has taught me that dogs that interact with other dogs and people are not apt to attack another dog or person. In addition, dogs that are on leash feel threatened and unable to defend themselves, which can cause fear aggression. Suffolk County has to catch up with the rest of the country in recognizing that exercising dogs off leash is a legitimate activity that thousands of its citizens desire.

Johan McConnell: I researched the Parks Rules and Regulations – Section 378-3: Persons authorized to use parks (Rules and Regulations read aloud). There is also a 1986 “Suffolk County Parks – Something for Everyone” (read aloud). The Trap and Skeet shooting range is being used by residents and non-residents and there is no distinction in the fees that are being paid. I also have questions on hunting at Southaven Park. When I walk on the west side of the Carmans River, there are huge signs warning “Danger: Hunting in Progress”. The literature says only waterfowl hunting is allowed on the east side of river.

John McConnell: I fully support dog parks. Yesterday I noticed the Trap and Skeet Range was closed, but there was a pick-up truck there with trailer with an ATV on the back. Neighbors heard the ATV riding around. Police were called, but no one responded. I know when police are called for people walking their dogs, they come. I don’t understand that.

Sharon Sacks: A dog is not just a responsibility, a companion, a source of love, a protector, or a means of socialization for the humans who have them. They are as necessary to our mental health and physical well being as proper diet and exercise. A large number of dogs at dog parks are animals that are rescued from situations, for instance, death row at the animal shelters because of their behavior. They were never socialized and therefore had no manners, or just plain became aggressive for lack of exercise and socialization. Dog Parks give these dogs, like my Mozart, a second chance. Many people remember how aggressive and wild Mozart was when I first adopted him. He is now the grandfather at the park and happy to have people pet him. Dogs need lots of exercise and how else can we teach them without off leash parks? A majority of homeowners have dogs and I, for one, need dog parks for my mental health and the continued mental health of my dog.

Ginny Munger Kahn: I am here as a representative of the Long Island Dog Owners Group. We are here because we do not believe that you understand the human impact of your decision to step up enforcement of leash laws at Coindre Hall. I don’t think you or the Parks Department have any concept of the role that Coindre Hall has played in the lives of thousands of Suffolk County dog owners. The Parks Department and, I’m afraid the Board, don’t understand that we have many common interests and the current situation is not sustainable. We are told what to do- to go someplace else or get in the run and we are given summonses. This high-handed approach is no way to deal with park users – dog owners. We reiterate our interest in working with the Parks Department and the Board of Trustees on getting a solution at Coindre Hall.

Barbara Buscareno: Since the 2003 legislation was passed, nothing happened at Coindre Hall until May 7, 2005 when Parks Commissioner Foley ordered that tickets be given out again. I

invited Commissioner Foley to talk to the dog owners. He came and talked to the dog owners and came to tour the site of the proposed location with us. He toured the site with us and he said he did not think the location was a good one. It's close to houses along Browns Road and we agreed. No one was really happy about this site and this location. We've worked hard to come up with a different way to deal with this. Legislator Cooper has our phone number to get in touch with us. We don't get any response back. We're looking to share the park. No one enjoys being under the constant tension that the Park Policemen are showing by giving tickets. I'm a white woman living in this day and age and to have to feel like I'm a criminal because I have an interest in a hobby, and I've been working on this since 1998, I think is truly amazing. Suffolk County has really worked hard to earn the status of an anti-dog county and it's truly terrible. We need to have some dialogue with the Parks Department. We have a meeting with Legislator Cooper tomorrow. We're being targeted and we don't deserve it.

A discussion ensued and Chairman Corwin summarized the Trustees conclusions.

Chairman Corwin: Let me suggest a couple of things. All the Trustees would like to see a happy solution to this problem. Some of the details that you have pointed out and some of the details the Commissioner pointed out are critical. They are not just annoying facts, they are critical. Whether or not something is legal is not something within the Commissioner's, the Park staff, the Park Police and certainly not the Trustees jurisdiction to just change. The venue by which you're going to have to deal with the problem is certainly, at some point, going to have to be legislative. In crafting a legislative proposal with Legislator Cooper, or any other legislators, you probably are best advised to work with some of the other groups who would say they've been jumped on by dogs or they don't want to see unfenced areas or whatever their issue may be. Those are equally legitimate concerns that the Commissioner, the Park staff and Park Police have to deal with. The Commissioner and the Parks Department are under all kinds of restrictions from the Council on Environmental Quality, the County Code, Parks Rules and Regulations, Historic Trust Rules and Regulations. It's not a simple matter. I don't think it's fair to ask the Commissioner to make, by fiat, an exception to what he is essentially bound to by law. You need to craft a solution that is not just acceptable to the legislature, but to your friends and neighbors. You mentioned getting everyone together in a room. I think that needs be done, to some extent without the Parks staff, and to work with the Parks staff through the legislators' offices. I strongly urge you to work with Legislator Cooper and any other legislators to come up with a solution that works not only for you, but for these other constituents. I'd like to hear the results of these meetings. As a Board of Trustees, we also have an oath that to make sure that we uphold the law, so we cannot advise the Commissioner to not enforce the law.

Bill Sickles: In response to the comments regarding the "Danger" signs on the west side of the Carmans River: there is no hunting on the west side of the river. The access to the duck blinds is from the east side, but they are shooting water fowl by the river and shots can carry across the river. The signs are there for notification and safety purposes. There is no water fowl hunting from the west side. There is no small game hunting or deer hunting allowed at Southaven.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 11, 2007 MINUTES**

Page 3 – First line – change Trustee Colina to Trustee McKay

Page 3 – Under "Park Police Hiring" add: Trustee McKay: Are there any female police officers.  
Chief Dave Brewer: Four.

Page 4 – Under Old Business/New Business: adjust spelling of Carmans River.

Page 6 – Third line – adjust spelling of trailer.

**A motion to accept the minutes as amended was made by Trustee White and seconded by Trustee Cardillo. The minutes were unanimously approved by a vote of 8-0-0.**

#### **PRESENTATION BY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND REAL ESTATE**

Lauretta Fischer proposed one acquisition.

##### Doxee's Creek – Stein Property

Acquisition of 2.5 acres in the Hamlet of Islip, Town of Islip which are summarized on the distributed aerial photographs and outlined in red ink. We are looking to acquire this under the Old Suffolk County Drinking Water Protection Program. This was on our Master List for acquisition.

**A motion to approve the proposed acquisition was made by Trustee Dawson and seconded by Trustee Borden. Unanimously approved by a vote of 8-0-0.**

#### **COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Commissioner Foley: There are three items that need your approval.

##### Capital Budget

Commissioner Foley: There will be a budget office meeting on March 2nd which we will attend. The County Charter calls for your approval of this before it is submitted. Our request is for \$14,445,000 for 2008 fiscal year. It is somewhat reflective of the true need for capital investment throughout the Parks system. The biggest increases continue to be in restoration, sometimes just stabilization of historic structures. The Parks Department has approximately 230 historic buildings.

**A resolution to approve the proposed capital budget was offered by Trustee White and seconded by Trustee McKay. Unanimously approved by a vote of 8-0-0.**

##### Resolution 1100-2007 – Extending Certain Benefits to Suffolk County Auxiliary Police Officers

Commissioner Foley: Before you is Resolution 1100-2007. I don't think you need to approve this today, but I'd like to get it before you for your review and consideration. This will be before the Parks Committee at their next meeting and proposes to implement the same fee schedule used for senior citizens, except for golf, for people enrolled in the Suffolk County Auxiliary Police. It proposes to discount a variety of county fees, including park fees.

Chairman Corwin: Commissioner, it would be nice to know a rough measure of the ball park impact figure of how many Auxiliary Police Officers there are. It makes the budget challenging and raises the question of fairness with someone who's been a volunteer firefighter for 30 years, or someone who has been an auxiliary police officer for 20 years, - is that the same level for someone who volunteers once a year for three hours? I don't want to get into the business of judging the relative merits of degrees of volunteering, but it would be nice to get a sense of the magnitude of this. I'm leaning towards waiting for Budget Review to do a fiscal analysis before we make our decision. We will table this until next month.

##### RFP – Indian Island

Commissioner: The RFP you have before you with the red confidential stamp on it, it is not final

yet, is for the Indian Island Golf Course operator (the golf pro). That current contract expires the end of this year and we're beginning the Request for Proposal process now.

Colleen Hofmeister: Trustee Colina has volunteered to serve on the RFP Review Committee. Standard Operating Procedure IO-4 calls for a formal resolution from the Trustees prior to advertising an RFP.

**A resolution to authorize the commencement of the RFP process for the golf pro concession at Indian Island County Golf Course was made by Trustee Cardillo and seconded by Trustee White. Unanimously approved by a vote of 8-0-0.**

#### Rental Housing

Commissioner Foley: The final resolution of rental housing rates, being implemented now, was there will be a four-step increase in rents from whatever the existing rent is to the appraised fair market value over approximately two years. The first increase will happen March 1, 2007, the next one September 1, 2007, then March 1, 2008 and the final one March 1, 2009.

#### Smith Point Beach Nourishment

Commissioner Foley: The dredging company has mobilized. Their equipment is sitting at Smith Point. We're waiting for our permits which we hope to have on Tuesday. We have to have them by Tuesday because there's no way to finish that project and get that sand on the beach by April 1st. The Corp of Engineers seems anxious to get us the permit.

#### Fishing Pier

Commissioner Foley: We don't have a permit and we don't know when we're going to get one. It's coming up on three years now. The review process just goes on and on.

#### Reservation Point-of-Sale System

Deputy Commissioner Bellone: We just completed our first year with the new reservation system. Due to its success, we've decided to expand its ability at our different parks. We're putting three new facilities on the reservation on-line system: Cupsogue Beach Camping, Shinnecock East Camping and Meschutt Beach Camping. As we get more successful with the system, we're hopefully going to continue its expansion.

Commissioner Foley: The only caution about those parks is three of those places have outer beach camping, which is not available for people who don't have 4-wheel drive vehicles, so we're going to have to be careful and loud about saying these are self contained 4-wheel drive camping opportunities only.

Deputy Commissioner Bellone: To address the 4-wheel drive question we are creating a reservation system where they will have to check off a box to say they have a 4-wheel drive vehicle before they are allowed to get to the reservation page.

#### Proposed Meeting Dates for 2007

Trustees reviewed meeting dates/locations for 2007. They will be distributed next month and posted on the Parks web page.

#### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Chairman Corwin: I do not have a specific report for this month.

#### **OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS**

Jennifer Kohn: We reviewed the issues about the Parks Foundation and found that there was no problem in having the Trustees select a board member. Please feel free.

Trustee McKay: We had a meeting of the Paumonok Wetlands Committee. It's an approximate 8 acre wetland in Huntington off Jericho Turnpike adjacent to Walt Whitman High School. It's a joint acquisition. The town has formed a Planning Committee and is responsible for developing an education program at the site in connection with the school.

Trustee Olsen: The Town of Brookhaven will be building a skate park out in Mastic. It will be up the end of the summer.

Chairman Corwin: Commissioner, please keep us apprised of how Trustee John Fritz is doing.

Tom Hroncich: April 22nd is Earth Day. Bill Sickles, Nick Gibbons and Emily Lauri are putting together a program and the Foundation is working with corporate sponsors. As of last week there were eleven groups involved in the program.

**DATE AND LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, March 15, 2007 at 1:00 PM at Deepwells Farm, St James, NY. Lunch will be served at 12:00 noon.

**The motion to adjourn was made by Trustee White and seconded by Trustee McKay.  
Motion approved unanimously by a vote 8-0-0.**

Minutes submitted by Ann Rothenberg.